

SECONDHAND SMOKE AND THE HEART: NEW RESEARCH, NEW URGENCY

Talking Points

For Tobacco Prevention Specialists

The health effects from exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke are more severe and immediate than we previously thought.

Successes

The 2005 Montana Clean Indoor Air Act (CIAA) eliminates smoking from nearly every workplace and indoor public space. The law recognizes the right of individuals to breathe smokefree air and is critical to protecting the health of all Montanans. The act provides an exception for bars until October 1, 2009.

Challenges

The U.S. Surgeon General has determined there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke and the only way to protect nonsmokers is to fully eliminate secondhand smoke from indoor air.

In Montana, even with full implementation of the CIAA, hotels and motels may designate up to 35% of guest rooms as smoking rooms.

Resources

1. Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program. <http://tobaccofree.mt.gov>.
2. Montana Clean Indoor Air Law, 50-40-101 to 120.
3. Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights, <http://www.no-smoke.org/>.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.
5. Glantz, S.A., "Meta-analysis of the effects of smokefree laws on acute myocardial infarction: an update," *Preventive Medicine* [Epub ahead of print], June 11, 2008.
6. Heiss, C.; Amabile, N.; Lee, *et al*, "Brief secondhand smoke exposure depresses endothelial progenitor cells activity and endothelial function: sustained vascular injury and blunted nitric oxide production," *Journal of the American College of Cardiology* 51(18): 1760-1771, May 6, 2008.

Fast Facts

- ◆ Secondhand smoke exposure, even for as little as 30 minutes, can cause heart attacks. People at risk for heart disease or stroke are particularly vulnerable.
- ◆ Smokefree laws reduce heart attack rates by nearly 20%.
- ◆ Secondhand smoke toxins adhere to surfaces; people unknowingly are exposed to these toxins long after smoking has ceased.
- ◆ The air quality in a smoky bar or casino can be 3 times worse than poor air quality due to wildfire, far exceeding the safe outdoor standards adopted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
- ◆ Evidence suggests that exposure to secondhand smoke may increase risk for stroke.
- ◆ Secondhand smoke exposure causes many other health problems:
 - increased risk of breast cancer in young women
 - heart disease and lung cancer in adults
 - low birth weight infants, sudden infant death syndrome, childhood ear and respiratory infections, and worsened asthma in children

For More Information

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